

Auto Accident Victim's Guide

An auto accident is a traumatic experience and the moments afterward seem to race by in a blur. It's hard to keep track of all the details, information and choices you make in the minutes, hours and days following the crash. This guide is designed to help you keep track of these details and to prepare you for what to expect as you move through the process of repairing your life.

You will find helpful information and important contact numbers in this victim's guide, along with space to keep track of key facts, details and information along with your reflections and thoughts about your experience.

This is not a legal document. Nor is it a homework assignment. So, you should feel free to write your thoughts and observations here without fear of judgment. Using this auto accident victim's companion will help you digest your complicated feelings after the accident and remember details you might have otherwise forgotten. Using your companion will empower you to feel more in control of your situation.

It will also help you decide what details, questions and concerns are most important and what you want to discuss with your attorney.

Another tool

George Sink, P.A. Injury Lawyers also has a free mobile Personal Injury Kit app that can provide key reminders and suggestions on the go. At the scene of the crash, you can use the app to take and catalogue photographs, record witness statements and get easy-to-follow step-by-step instructions on what to do after an accident. Download your free app at: www.sinklawapp.com

Contact an attorney

It's usually important to contact an attorney right after a wreck, so you don't have to spend time second-guessing yourself later on. Insurance companies have trained professionals on their side. You need one on yours.

Do not discuss your case with the other driver's insurer. It's perfectly acceptable to tell the insurance case agent who calls you that you are willing to talk about property damage, but that you want to discuss your case with an attorney before explaining the details of the crash or your physical injuries.

Anything you tell the responsible party's insurer will be evidence and could be used against you in ways you may not expect.

It's important to talk with an attorney early in the process even if you aren't sure you want to work with an attorney. The experienced personal injury legal team at George Sink, P.A. Injury Lawyers will gladly answer your questions. They can help

you understand your rights and what your options are. Armed with information, you can now make educated decisions about your case.

Using the auto accident victim's companion

You can use your victim's guide at any point during your experience following an auto accident, but the earlier you do it, the more useful it will be. If you write down the details of your accident when it's still fresh in your memory, you'll have more complete information. Starting early will also help you stay organized and give you a place to keep track of important contacts as you go.

The Sink Law Personal Injury Kit app for your smart phone can also guide you through some of these questions and offer a digital method for recording and tracking some of the information you will write down here. Download your free app at www.sinklapp.com.

Write down as much or as little as you need to help you remember and process the events and people surrounding your accident.

From the scene of the accident

Date and time of accident:

Location of accident:

How many cars were involved:

Name(s) and contact information for the other driver or drivers involved:

Names and phone numbers of passengers in your vehicle and in the other vehicle(s):

Other driver's insurance information:

Your insurance company, policy number, and other information:

Police officer, sheriff's deputy or state patrol officer who responded to the scene:

Paramedic you spoke with and ambulance number:

Injuries discussed with paramedics and their comments:

Who else involved in the accident was treated by paramedics?

If you went to the hospital, what hospital did you go to and who treated you there?

What injuries did you discuss, what treatments did you receive:

Describe the accident as you remember it occurring:

[illegible]

Do you remember anything unusual about the other driver's behavior after the accident? Did you notice a smell of alcohol or observe anger or sleepiness in the driver? Was the other driver taken away in handcuffs?

Have you seen your car since the accident? How much damage did it sustain? What was the monetary loss, according to your insurer? How did the car look?

Who did you talk to at your insurance company and what did you discuss with him/her? What is your claim number?

Did you talk to anyone from the other party's insurer? What did you tell him or her?
(It is advised that you not discuss injuries with the at-fault party's insurance company before consulting an attorney.)

How are your injuries impacting your ability to work?

Are you worried your injuries will impact your ability to work long-term? If so, how?

How are your injuries impacting the rest of your life? Are there activities you enjoy that you haven't been able to participate in?

Are you worried your injuries will prevent you from participating in activities you enjoy in the future? How?

What sort of help do you want from an attorney?

Feel free to move into a separate notebook or journal and write down any other information about your accident you want to remember, any observations, thoughts or desires.

There can be so much going on following an auto accident. You're juggling doctor appointments, insurance calls, finding replacement transportation and everything else from your every-day life on top of it. It's easy to forget what your doctors have told you and to ignore your body as you fight through the pain to get things done.

This companion is designed to help you concentrate, take time and document your healing process. Along these lines, write down any bruises, breaks or pain you feel – even the smallest things like skin irritation from airbag powder burns. Note new pains as they emerge and document your pain and wounds as they heal.

We can help you get started, but you can - and should - keep another notebook. Here are a few things you should document:

- Your physical pain
- Conversations with doctors and health care professions
- Conversations with the insurance companies
- Conversations with your employer about missed work
- Notes on how you're healing
- Information about how your injuries are impacting your daily life
- Conversations with attorneys
- Bills

Until you get a notebook, feel free to write below.

Day of the accident:

Day 2:

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Stay in touch with authorities

The county attorney where the collision occurred will sometimes file a criminal case against the at-fault driver if the accident was particularly bad or the driver didn't act responsibly afterward. There will almost always be a criminal case if the at-fault driver was suspected of driving under the influence of something.

It's a good idea to stay in contact with the county attorney and let their office know what you would like. Always ask to be informed of court dates and decisions.

Getting more information

Even if there will be no criminal case, you will likely need to contact the police, sheriff's office or state patrol to get the records from your accident. That will be important information if you decide to pursue legal action. Looking at the records can also help you better understand how your accident occurred as police reports frequently include witness accounts.

Here are some contact numbers for local authorities:

Police

- North Charleston police: (843) 740-2802
- Columbia: (803) 545-3577
- Greenville: (864) 467-5278
- Orangeburg: (803) 268-1018
- Walterboro: (843) 782-1040

- Florence: (843) 665-3191
- Sumpter: (803) 436-2700
- Moncks Corner: (843) 719-7930

Sheriff's Offices

- Richland County: (803) 576-3000
- Charleston County: (843) 554-2463
- Florence County: (843) 665-2121
- Lexington County: (803) 785-2417
- Greenville County: (864) 467-5355
- Georgetown County: (843) 546-5102
- Sumpter County: (803) 436-2700

South Carolina State Patrol

(803) 896-7920

Mobile Sink Law Personal Injury Kit app

Don't forget you can also access a lot of useful information in Sink Law's mobile app for your smart phone. Download it for free here: <http://www.sinklawapp.com/>

If you have any questions or need any guidance to get through the day and weeks following an accident, contact the experienced legal team at George Sink, P.A. Injury Lawyers. We can help.

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